



MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
COORDINATING COUNCIL**

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

MISSION:

*To reduce the incidence of domestic violence and create a safe
community for families to live free of abuse.*

September 15, 2017

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DVCC MEMBERSHIP EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

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FOR **UMA AHLUWALIA**, DIRECTOR
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HUMAN SERVICES

NICOLE Y. DREW
COMMISSIONER
FOR **JODI FINKELSTEIN**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

DEBBIE FEINSTEIN
VICE CHAIR, DVCC
ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY
FOR **JOHN MCCARTHY**
MONTGOMERY COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY
MONTGOMERY COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

RUSSELL HAMILL
ASSISTANT CHIEF
FOR **J. THOMAS MANGER**, CHIEF
MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE

THE HONORABLE **SIDNEY KATZ**
CHAIR, DVCC
COUNCILMEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

THE HONORABLE **JOHN MOFFITT**
ASSOCIATE JUDGE
FOR THE HONORABLE **EUGENE WOLFE**
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
DISTRICT COURT OF MARYLAND FOR
MONTGOMERY COUNTY

DARREN M. POPKIN
SHERIFF
MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

THE HONORABLE **KARLA SMITH**
ASSOCIATE JUDGE
FOR THE HONORABLE **JOHN W. DEBELIUS, III**
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT

THE HONORABLE **REBECCA SMONDROWSKI**
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FOR THE HONORABLE **MICHAEL A. DURSO**
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WILLIAM SOLLOD
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DIVISION OF PAROLE AND PROBATION
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ANGELA TALLEY
CHIEF, PRE-TRIAL SERVICES
FOR **ROBERT GREEN**, DIRECTOR
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PUBLIC MEMBERS

VACANT
STUDENT MEMBER

SHEILA KAMDAR
COMMUNITY MEMBER

RESA LEVY
COMMUNITY MEMBER

DOROTHY FAIT, ESQ.
COMMUNITY MEMBER

CHERYL KRAVITZ
COMMUNITY MEMBER

ESHIGO OKASILI, ESQ.
COMMUNITY MEMBER

STAFF

SMITA VARIA
PROGRAM MANAGER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

COUNCIL INFORMATION

TERM OF SERVICE

There are seventeen voting members of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) who serve without compensation and are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. Five are Ex-Officio members who serve at the request of the County Council: the Administrative Judge of the Circuit Court; the Administrative Judge of the District Court; the Sheriff; the State's Attorney; and the Regional Administrator for the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. There are six Ex-Officio members who are appointed by the County Executive: a member of the County Council selected by the Council President; the Directors of the Montgomery County Departments of Correction and Rehabilitation; Health and Human Services; and Police; the Executive Director of the Montgomery County Commission for Women; and the President of the Board of Education for Montgomery County Public Schools. In addition, there are five members of the general public appointed by the County Executive for renewable three year terms, one of whom is an attorney representing domestic violence victims, and four who have a demonstrated interest in domestic violence issues, including at least one who is a survivor of domestic violence. In 2010, the DVCC's code pertaining to membership was amended to add a student member. The student member is a high school junior or senior who is appointed to serve a one-year term which can be renewed for one additional year.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The DVCC meets bi-monthly on the second Thursday of the month, and has met sixty-five times since September 2006. Meetings are open to the public.

LEADERSHIP

In January 2017, the DVCC elected Councilmember Sidney Katz as Chair; and elected Debbie Feinstein, Assistant State's Attorney as Vice Chair.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the tenth year since its creation, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) has advanced its mission of reducing the incidence of domestic violence and creating a safe community where families are free of abuse. In 2016-2017, the four committees, Victim Services, Education and Outreach, Legislative and Policy Planning and Offender Program and Policy, have each identified focus areas and made progress on executing recommendations from the previous report. This report summarizes the accomplishments of the past year and makes recommendations for the next year.

Special thanks go to the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation for its continued, unwavering support of Domestic Violence Coordinating Council initiatives and the Montgomery County Family Justice Center.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The FJC welcomed DVS Legal Services as an on-site partner. DVS works with clients at the FJC to connect them with legal representation to obtain protective orders and in divorce and custody cases;
- The Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team reconstituted and meets on a monthly basis to make findings and recommendations related to fatalities and near fatalities involving domestic violence in Montgomery County;
- The FJC reformatted the Montgomery County Assessment Lethality Emergency Response Team (ALERT) to allow all relevant agencies to get real time updates on high risk domestic violence cases;
- The Education and Outreach Committee collaborated with multiple Montgomery County agencies and community organizations for the 8th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Conference, which was held on April 2, 2017 and had record attendance numbers;
- The Education and Outreach Committee coordinated the 8th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Public Service Announcement (PSA) Video Contest, which had a record number of entries;
- The Education and Outreach Committee presented the Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum to youth participants in Montgomery County Public Schools as well as various youth groups in the community;
- The Education and Outreach Committee continued the expansion of the Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM) with programs at Richard Montgomery High School, Springbrook High School, Montgomery Blair High School, and Colonel Zadok A. Magruder High School;
- The Education and Outreach Committee expanded the five-language information cards to include the 16 most commonly spoken languages in Montgomery County.

The card promotes the FJC and the services it provides to both English and non-English-speaking victims of domestic violence and their families;

- The Education and Outreach Committee collaborated with the Montgomery County Commission for Women, Public Information Office, and other agencies to coordinate a domestic violence outreach campaign, planned for Fall 2017;
- The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee carefully monitored domestic violence-related legislation that was proposed during the 2016 legislative session in the Maryland General Assembly;
- The Domestic Violence Coordinating Council assisted in the development and preparation for opening of a Supervised Exchange and Visitation Center;
- The Abuser Intervention Program participated in a research study on abuser intervention programs by the University of Baltimore and the University of Maryland Baltimore.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2017 - 2018

- The Victim Services Committee recommends ongoing collaboration among FJC agency partners and the FJC Foundation to continue identifying gaps in domestic violence victim services, and then exploring appropriate, sustainable solutions to fill those gaps;
- The Victim Services Committee recommends continued collaboration with FJC agency partners in reviewing domestic violence fatalities and near fatalities to ensure the utmost safety for domestic violence victims in Montgomery County;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continued collaboration with county agencies, community organizations, and schools to increase awareness and prevention of teen dating violence through the Choose Respect Montgomery initiative;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recommends engaging young men in domestic violence prevention through continued expansion of the CBIM program;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continued promotion of the Family Justice Center and its services through continued maintenance of the FJC Multi - Language Information Card initiative;
- The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continuing to develop and implement the domestic violence public information campaign as planned with the assistance of the Montgomery County Public Information Office and other County agencies and organizations;
- The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence to monitor and promote legislation that supports the mission of the DVCC;

- The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Department of Health and Human services and other related agencies to launch a successful Supervised Exchange and Visitation Center in Montgomery County;
- The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends ongoing collaboration between the Abuser Intervention Program, the Courts, Pre-Trial Services and the Family Justice Center to address any concerns regarding the program;

VICTIM SERVICES COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DARREN POPKIN, SHERIFF

The Victim Services Committee has been collaborating actively with Montgomery County Family Justice Center (FJC) agency partners, the Montgomery County FJC Foundation and community volunteers for ongoing sustainability and effective operation of the FJC. The Committee is focused on establishing and funding FJC programs that not only promote safety for victims of domestic violence, but also assist these victims in locating a path to sustainability. Primary objectives successfully achieved in the previous year are outlined below, as well as recommendations for the coming year

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER



Since opening its doors in April 2009, more than nine thousand victims representing over one hundred different countries of origin have sought services at the Montgomery County FJC with the goal of ending domestic violence in their lives. FJCs are recognized nationally by the law enforcement, medical and mental health communities as a “best-practice” for responding to domestic violence and providing services to victims and their families. Domestic violence victims who come to the FJC are able to receive a broad array of critical Montgomery County services, which are provided in a safe, welcoming environment that also offers on-site child care to

support clients while they access FJC services; and help with basic needs such as shelter, food, housing, and transportation, all of which are often lost to victims forced to flee their homes.

EXPANSIONS IN CLIENT SERVICES

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the Montgomery County FJC on-site partners included the Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office, Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office, Montgomery County Police Department, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, House of Ruth - Maryland, Catholic Charities, the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA), the Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (DVRP) and Career Catchers. These partners provide a vast array of services to FJC clients and their families, including comprehensive safety planning, service of protective orders, welfare checks, criminal investigation and prosecution of offenders, therapy for both adults and children, legal representation at protective order hearings, immigration legal services, and career counseling. Off-site partners include the Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation, the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional

Services, Chesapeake Counseling Associates, the Muslim Community Center, Montgomery College, the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation, Court Watch Montgomery, and Women Who Care Ministries. Nearly all on-site FJC partners have staff that are bi-lingual in English and Spanish, and also have access to a language line to provide services in the language most comfortable for the victim. This year, the FJC officially welcomed DVS Legal Services as an on-site partner. DVS works with clients at the FJC to connect them with legal representation to obtain protective orders and in divorce and custody cases.

The FJC is now holding monthly meetings with all on-site partners to share announcements, updates and changes in policy at the FJC. The on-site partners also discuss any changes in their services or concerns they have. These monthly meetings allow for open communication so that all partners can collaborate efficiently and effectively to serve clients.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victim Services Committee recommends ongoing collaboration among FJC agency partners and the FJC Foundation to continue identifying gaps in domestic violence victim services, and then exploring appropriate, sustainable solutions to fill those gaps.

CASE REVIEW TEAMS

In November, the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team (DVFRT) reconstituted and is now formally holding monthly meetings. The Chair of DVFRT is Debbie Feinstein, Assistant State's Attorney, and the Vice Chair is Tom Manion, Director of the Family Justice Center. The agencies represented on DVFRT are the Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney, Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff, Montgomery County Police Department, Shady Grove Medical Center, House of Ruth Maryland, Office of the County Attorney, Montgomery County Child Welfare Services, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Maryland Division of Parole and Probation, Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse, Takoma Park Police Department, DVS Legal Services, Montgomery County Abused Persons Program, Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission, Montgomery County Public Schools, Judiciary of Maryland, and Muslim Community Center. This team makes findings and recommendations related to fatalities and near fatalities involving domestic violence in Montgomery County.

The Victim Services Committee and the Offender Program and Policy Committee collaborated to reformat the Montgomery County Assessment Lethality Emergency Response Team (ALERT) meetings. ALERT has now changed from meeting once a week to once every two months. Between meetings, the multi-disciplinary team communicates via email to allow for discussion of high risk domestic violence cases in real time, rather than waiting for the weekly meetings. This format change has received positive feedback from members, and has led to more efficient collaboration and coordination of services.

RECOMMENDATION: The Victim Services Committee recommends continued collaboration with FJC agency partners in reviewing domestic violence fatalities and near fatalities to ensure the utmost safety for domestic violence victims in Montgomery County.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DEBBIE FEINSTEIN

The Education and Outreach Committee continued to focus on its teen dating violence prevention initiative during the past year. This initiative, titled Choose Respect Montgomery, includes three primary programs: the annual conference for teens, their parents, educators, and youth service providers; the public service announcement video contest for teens; and the healthy teen dating curriculum presentations which are presented in the County's middle and high schools. The Committee also expanded the Coaching Boys Into Men program, which utilizes the unique role of coaches in the lives of young male athletes to teach them to be respectful both on and off the field. The Committee also expanded the previous FJC 5-language card program, to a language card with the 16 most common languages spoken in Montgomery County. Finally, the Committee is working with the Commission for Women, Sheriff's Office, State's Attorney's Office, Police Department, Public Information Office, Regional Service Centers, and other County programs on a domestic violence outreach campaign. Highlights from each of these activities, as well as recommendations for the future, are listed below.

CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY: **HEALTHY TEEN DATING CONFERENCE**

The 8th Annual Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Conference was held on Sunday, April 2, 2017 at Richard Montgomery High School. Funded by Verizon Wireless through its partnership with the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation, and sponsored by the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC), Montgomery County Public Schools, and numerous other Montgomery County agencies and organizations, the purpose of this annual conference is to promote respect in dating relationships and to raise community awareness about the prevalence of teen dating violence. The conference, which was promoted using the hashtag #RespectYourSelfie2017, focused on how to identify the red flags of dating abuse, who to talk to and how to help a friend.



This year, nearly 600 students, parents, public officials, educators, youth service providers, and volunteers attended the conference making it the most well-attended conference to date. Attendees came from more than 50 different schools, and were split 63% female, 37% male. As soon as attendees arrived, they walked the Red Carpet and took selfies with Radio Station DJs Lisa Berigan (BIG100), Michael-J (98.7 WMZQ), and Mike Jones (DC101) and public officials. Attendees were encouraged to post their selfies on social media using

#RespectYourSelfie2017. Through our continued partnership with Zoomph, a live social media feed with rotating tiles was running in the main auditorium, showcasing all posts and pictures that used the conference hashtag.

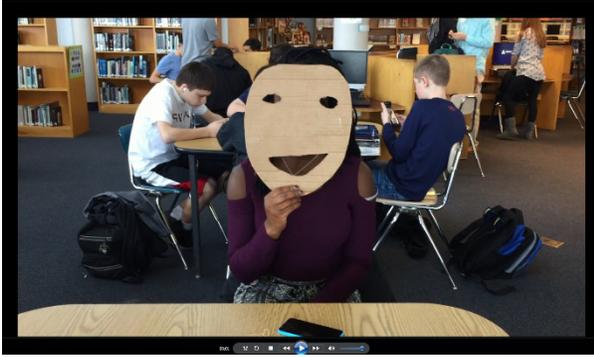
The conference, emceed by Toby Knapp (HOT 99.5) and Sabrina Conte (97.1 WASH-FM) also consisted of an incredibly powerful survivor story by a young woman who had attended a Montgomery County Public School. Then, the winners of the Public Service Announcement Video Contest were announced, with “Because He Loves Me,” submitted by a group from Northwest High School taking first place and winning the first ever “Fan Favorite” award by popular vote. Students were then broken down by grade level and participated in workshops developed by the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA). The workshop, entitled It’s Not Love®, begins with a “choose your own path” activity. In groups of 3-4, participants were assigned one of many characters who were in a situation involving dating abuse, making various decisions that influenced the narrative and following the story through to one of several endings. These stories were then used as a jumping-off point for a group discussion about these issues. Youth service providers and educators participated in similar workshops, while parents all participated in one workshop session led by Cheryl Kravitz, a member of the DVCC and a domestic violence survivor. Following the workshops, attendees reconvened in the auditorium where the conference was brought to a close with the distribution of raffle prizes and free pizza for all attendees.

The conference evaluations were very positive and were assessed by conference planners and will be taken into consideration when planning future events.

The DVCC is very appreciative of the event sponsorship from Verizon Wireless through its partnership with the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation. Special thanks also go to Montgomery County Public Schools, JCADA, iHeart Radio, Zoomph and the numerous other county and community partners that made the 8th Annual Choose Respect Conference a huge success. Plans for the 9th annual conference scheduled for Sunday, April 15, 2018 at Richard Montgomery High School are already underway.

CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY: **PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT VIDEO CONTEST**

For the eighth consecutive year, the DVCC coordinated the Public Service Announcement Video Contest for local teens in middle and high school. This contest is intended to evoke teens’ awareness and perspective on the issue of teen dating violence, while also allowing them to be creative. Participants were challenged to submit a 60-second video promoting attention to dating abuse. They were also asked to include resource information such as the phone number to a local or national helpline. A record 100 entries from 22 different schools were submitted. Along with the winner chosen by a panel of judges, there was also an



WINNER: "BECAUSE HE LOVES ME"

additional award for a fan favorite, sponsored by the Montgomery County Police Department Foundation and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Theta Omega Chapter. Over one thousand students voted for their favorite video, which also happened to be the winner. "Because He Loves Me," submitted by a group from Northwest High School won \$1,500. This year's contest was sponsored by Verizon Wireless through its partnership with the Montgomery County Family Justice

Center Foundation. Winners were announced at the 8th Annual Choose Respect Healthy Teen Dating Conference.

The DVCC and its partners believe this contest provides a worthwhile opportunity for teens, and will launch the 2018 contest in October 2017. Entries will be accepted in English and Spanish, and cash prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners, which will be announced at the 2018 Choose Respect Conference on Sunday, April 15, 2018 at Richard Montgomery High School.

CHOOSE RESPECT MONTGOMERY: HEALTHY TEEN DATING CURRICULUM

The Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum is available in both English and Spanish. It is an instructional presentation based on nationally recognized dating abuse prevention curricula to include: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Choose Respect, Liz Claiborne, Love is Not Abuse and Break the Cycle. The 45 minute Prezi presentation provides multiple opportunities for student involvement, and features brief videos on various dating abuse topics such as verbal abuse, abuse through technology and how to intervene as a responsible witness. The conversations with teens during the presentation specifically focus on:

- 1) Components of healthy dating behaviors such as trust and safe, non-threatening communication;
- 2) Identification of early warning signs of abusive dating behavior to include control, isolation, criticism and manipulation;
- 3) Identification of the roles in abusive dating relationships; and
- 4) Addressing dating violence when it is witnessed in school or among social circles.

Local resources and national teen dating abuse help lines and websites are also discussed.

The Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum is offered at no cost. Presentation requests are received at the Sheriff's Office from various school personnel,

such as health teachers, counselors and school principals. Representatives of the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, and Chesapeake Counseling Associates conduct the presentations.

In its seventh year since implementation, the Choose Respect Montgomery Healthy Teen Dating Curriculum was presented to 1,228 youth participants from 22 schools and community groups.

The Committee also met with administrators at MCPS to discuss how to publicize the free program to Health Teachers across the county. In addition, the DVCC Program Manager and JCADA are currently updating the program to make it more relatable to today's middle and high school youth.

RECOMMENDATION: The Choose Respect Montgomery initiative has been a successful prevention and outreach project over the past seven years. It is the recommendation of the Education and Outreach Committee to continue collaboration with county agencies, community organizations, and schools to increase awareness and prevention of teen dating violence through the Choose Respect Montgomery initiative.

COACHING BOYS INTO MEN

Historically, intimate partner violence prevention has been viewed solely as a women's issue. Anti-violence organizations and programs were established as safe spaces where women exposed to intimate partner and sexual violence could find support and healing. In recent years, however, attention has been drawn to the importance of engaging men and boys in violence prevention as well. Many promising programs that involve young men are being introduced across the United States, including Futures Without Violence's program Coaching Boys Into Men (CBIM). CBIM is a free toolkit that utilizes the unique and important role that coaches play in the lives of young men. These comprehensive tools assist coaches in planning important discussions with athletes about respect for women and girls, and that violence doesn't equal strength. Through CBIM, male athletes learn skills to avoid violence and abuse in their relationships.



Springbrook High School hosted the first CBIM pilot program in Montgomery County, led by varsity football coach Adam Bahr during the 2013-2014 academic year. Due to the success of the pilot program, Springbrook High School fully implemented CBIM as part of the standard football season moving forward. The CBIM program was expanded to Montgomery Blair High School for the 2014-2015 academic year, led by Patrick Dudley, the football team's tight end and character coach. The 2015-2016 academic year saw yet another

expansion, as Richard Montgomery High School adopted the program, led by Head Coach Josh Klotz and former DVCC Student Member Julian Avenilla, a Richard Montgomery High School senior. For this past 2016-2017 academic year, the Weight Room instructor, Brett Goynes, at Colonel Zadok A. Magruder High School incorporated CBIM in all of his classes. All four schools will be implementing CBIM again during the 2017-2018 school year.

RECOMMENDATION: The Education and Outreach Committee recommends engaging young men in domestic violence prevention through continued expansion of the CBIM program.

FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER MULTI-LANGUAGE INFORMATION CARDS

Victims of domestic violence often do not know what services are available to them, or where to go to seek help. In an effort to promote awareness of these resources, the Education and Outreach Committee developed Family Justice Center (FJC) information cards. Previously, these cards contained the location of the FJC, contact information, a list of available services, and other important information in 5 languages.



In the Spring of 2017, the Committee decided to revamp the language cards and expand it to the 16 most commonly spoken languages in Montgomery County – English, Spanish, French, Mandarin, Amharic, Korean, Swahili, Igbo, Arabic, Tagalog, Russian, Urdu, Hindi, Vietnamese, Farsi and Portuguese. The card simply states, “Are you afraid of your partner? Free help is available,” with the address and phone number of the Family Justice Center. The Committee wanted to ensure that the cards were accessible to low literacy populations, and to more people who speak different languages. The cards will be placed in clear, wall-affixed receptacles and will be on display in all Montgomery County Regional

Services Centers, all Montgomery County public libraries, both District Court locations in Montgomery County – Rockville and Silver Spring – in the courtrooms where protective order cases are normally heard, and in all of the women’s restrooms in the Judicial Center/Circuit Court building. Replenishment protocols are in place for all locations in which the cards will be on display.

RECOMMENDATION: The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continued promotion of the Family Justice Center and its services through continued maintenance of the FJC Multi - Language Information Card initiative.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC INFORMATION CAMPAIGN

The Montgomery County Public Information Office has been working with Education and Outreach Committee on a countywide domestic violence education and outreach campaign. The campaign included banner ads on at the top of the County social media pages, the County digital screens, and the County Rotator in November and December. The Committee created posters that were displayed in the Montgomery County Public Libraries, Recreation Centers and other Community locations throughout the County. The posters were also made into ads that were posted inside Montgomery County Ride-On buses. Lastly, the Committee created a Public Service Announcement in both English and Spanish, which ran on the County TV Channel and on social media in December and January.

RECOMMENDATION: The Education and Outreach Committee recommends continuing to develop and implement the domestic violence public information campaign as planned with the assistance of the Montgomery County Public Information Office and other County agencies and organizations.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIR: DOROTHY FAIT, ESQ.

The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee focused this year on supporting certain domestic violence- related legislation in the state of Maryland. Below is a summary of supported legislation as well as the committee's recommendation for the coming year.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATION UPDATES

Numerous domestic violence-related bills were passed during this year's legislative session, all of which will take effect on October 1, 2017. Pieces of legislation that were of particular interest to the DVCC Legislative and Policy Planning Committee include:

- HB498/SB562 - Health Care Decisions Act - Advance Directives and Surrogate Decision Making - Disqualified Individuals
Prohibits certain individuals from serving as a surrogate decision maker or health care agent for the purpose of making health care decisions for a patient if they are the subject of an interim, temporary or final protective order for that patient or if the individual is the spouse of a patient with a separation agreement or who has filed for divorce.
- HB294/SB224 - Public Safety - Regulated Firearms - Definition of Convicted of a Disqualifying Crime
Ensures that people who have received a Probation Before Judgment (PBJ) in a criminal court case for second degree assault for a domestically-related crime cannot retain their firearms.
- HB293/SB274 - Family Law - Divorce - Domestic Violence Order
Allows the admission of a protective order as evidence in a divorce case. The bill also allows a court to consider compliance with a domestic violence order as grounds for granting a decree of limited or absolute divorce.
- HB429/SB217 - Criminal Law - Sexual Offenses - Physical Resistance
Establishes that evidence of physical resistance by a victim is not required to prove that a sexual crime was committed.
- HB1/SB230 - Labor and Employment - Maryland Healthy Working Families Act
Requires employers with 15 or more employees to allow the employees to earn a certain number of annual paid sick and safe days, including earning a maximum of five days per year. The safe time component requires employers to allow survivors of domestic abuse or sexual assault to use paid sick leave to care for their health after these incidents or seek legal protections or new housing.

RECOMMENDATION: The Legislative and Policy Planning Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Office of Intergovernmental Relations and the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence to monitor and promote legislation that supports the mission of the DVCC.

OFFENDER PROGRAM AND POLICY COMMITTEE

CHAIR: ANGELA TALLEY

The Offender Program and Policy Committee includes members from Montgomery County and Maryland State agencies that focus on domestic violence offender intervention. Committee members remain focused on evaluating offender programs within their individual departments and identifying collaborative opportunities to improve communication and offender services as a whole. The details of the committee's departmental and system review as well as recommendations for improvement are outlined below.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SUPERVISED EXCHANGE AND VISITATION CENTER

In 2014, County Executive Isiah Leggett established a work group to address the issue of supervised visitation in Montgomery County. This collaborative group included members representing the Montgomery County Circuit Court, the District Court of Maryland for Montgomery County, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, and other county agencies. The workgroup participated in numerous discussions regarding the feasibility of establishing a Supervised Visitation Center in Montgomery County, and what such a center would look like. Upon further review, the costs of the center were higher than expected, and the work group was unable to move forward.

The DVCC then decided to look into the supervised visitation and monitored exchange issue again, with a focus on paring down the former proposal into something more financially feasible. In the Spring of 2016, a new proposal to establish supervised visitation and monitored exchange services in Montgomery County was completed and submitted to the County Executive for review. The new proposal offered three implementation options: (1) to establish a monitored exchange program only; (2) to establish a full, combined supervised visitation and monitored exchange program; and (3) to begin with a monitored exchange program with planned future expansion to include supervised visitation services after two years.

Following meetings with the County Executive, County Council and other stakeholders, it was decided that the Supervised Exchange and Visitation Center would be entered into the FY18 budget and monitored by the Department of Health and Human Services. The Center, opening in the Fall of 2018 will initially be for monitored exchanges only, and then expand to include supervised visits. Additionally, the Center will only be used for cases where supervised visitation or monitored exchange is court ordered.

RECOMMENDATION: The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends ongoing collaboration with the Department of Health and Human services and other related agencies to launch a successful Supervised Exchange and Visitation Center in Montgomery County.

ABUSER INTERVENTION PROGRAM

This year, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) participated in a research study being conducted by the University of Baltimore and the University of Maryland Baltimore County on abuser intervention programs. The study consisted of data collection, record review, and interviews with staff. Staying on top of current research in the domestic violence field is crucial to understanding and implementing best practices, and therefore, providing better services to the community.

RECOMMENDATION: The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends ongoing collaboration between the Abuser Intervention Program, the Courts, Pre-Trial Services and the Family Justice Center to address any concerns regarding the program.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S ASSESSMENT LETHALITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

The Offender Program and Policy Committee and the Victim Services Committee worked together to reformat the Montgomery County Assessment Lethality Emergency Response Team (ALERT) meetings. ALERT has now changed from meeting once a week to once every two months. Between meetings, the multi-disciplinary team communicates via email to allow for discussion of high risk domestic violence cases in real time, rather than waiting for the weekly meetings. This format change has received positive feedback from the members.

RECOMMENDATION: The Offender Program and Policy Committee recommends continued collaboration with FJC agency partners in reviewing high risk domestic violence cases to ensure the utmost safety for domestic violence victims in Montgomery County.

SUMMARY

Through the services provided by the FJC, the monitoring of domestic violence policy, and the implementation of numerous domestic violence prevention initiatives, the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) continues to play an active and critical role in creating a safe community for families to live free of abuse. These activities and programs would not be possible without the support of DVCC agency partners, community groups and the Montgomery County Family Justice Center Foundation. In the coming year, the DVCC will continue to promote and expand existing initiatives and services as well as explore new, innovative strategies to reduce the incidence of domestic violence in Montgomery County.



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